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NT 520 New Testament Introduction

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NT 520 Introduction to the New Testament

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Fall 2000
Tues/ Thurs 9:30-10:45
Office Hours: Tu/Th 4pm-5pm
Other hours by appointment

Description: This is an introduction to the New Testament, its content, its context, and its interpretation. In the course of the semester, we will examine the individual books of the New Testament; the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts out of which the New Testament arose; various types of interpretative methods used to study the New Testament; and theological themes in the New Testament. We will work to draw this knowledge together into a means for thinking about the New Testament in our contemporary context.

Objectives: By the end of this course the student should be able to

- give a broad account of the content of the individual New Testament writings and identify resources for further study of these writings;
- articulate the social and historical background out of which the New Testament arose;
- articulate how one's beliefs about Scripture impinge on how one engages biblical texts in interpretation;
- identify a range of questions (e.g., historical, literary, canonical) that might be addressed to particular New Testament texts and explore those questions in the process of interpreting particular New Testament texts;
- identify significant, critical resources for New Testament study and deploy those sources critically in New Testament study;
- probe the interplay of theology and ethics in the various New Testament writers;
- demonstrate awareness of the significance of the original languages for understanding and interpreting the New Testament; and
- integrate these concerns and methodologies in a sound hermeneutic.

Course Requirements:

On matters of style consult Carole Slade, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, and Theses* (11th ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); or *The Chicago Manual of Style* (14th ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Turning in assignments on time is a high priority. Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per day (i.e., A paper becomes A-, B paper becomes B-, etc.). Any late papers **must** be turned into Tracy Hoffman, the faculty secretary in BC 226. She will note the day and time that they are turned in.

- 1. Preparation, Attendance, and Participation:** Attendance is expected and will be recorded. It is the students' responsibility to make sure that they record their attendance in class. The professor will not record attendance at a later time. Students who miss more than 6 class sessions will not be eligible for a passing grade. Students should come to class prepared by completing reading and assignments prior to the beginning of the class period. Each student will have the opportunity to participate in group discussions and projects during class time. (15%)
- 2. Critical Book Reviews:** The student will write two book reviews. For the first review, choose one of the following: Jeffers or Theissen. For the second review, choose one of the following: Green, Camery-Hoggart, or Gonzalez. Reviews should be 500-750 words in length (2-3 pages), typed, and double-spaced. For more information on book review expectations and grading criteria, see the file in the course folder on the T drive. (2 x 10% = 20%)
- 3. Interpretive Assignments:** On three of the six interpretive assignment days the student will prepare a close reading of the passage under discussion. This should be between 750-1,000 words (3-4 pages), typed, double spaced. It is due at the beginning of class. Interpretive assignments will not be accepted after class. For more information on interpretive assignments see the file in the course folder on the T drive. (3 x 10% = 30%)
- 4. Exegetical Paper or Project:** This will be a 2000-3000 word (8-12 pages) research paper typed, double-spaced, with appropriate notes and bibliography (a minimum of 10 secondary sources), presenting an interpretation of a New Testament passage chosen from among your close readings. This paper should evidence both a close reading of the text and critical engagement with the range of secondary resources appropriate to the study. For more information on expectations and grading criteria for research papers, see the file in the course folder on the T drive. If you would like to do a project that makes use of different media (audio, video, etc.), please make an appointment to discuss your idea with the professor. All projects must have approval from the professor prior to submission. The final paper/project is due on Thursday, December 14th at 11am. (35%)

Grading:

Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria (catalog, p. 24):

A= Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives

B= Good work: substantial achievement of course objectives

C= Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives

D= Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

F= Unacceptable work: failure of course work

A plus (+) or minus (-) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good; C- = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

Required Reading:

The New Testament (RSV or NRSV)

Green, Joel B., ed. *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995.

Jeffers, James. *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1999.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999.

Malina, Bruce J. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster, 1993.

Recommended Reading:

Achtemeier, Paul J. *Inspiration and Authority: Nature and Function of Christian Scripture*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999.

Camery-Hoggart, Jerry. *Speaking of God: Reading and Preaching the Word of God*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995.

Theissen, Gerd. *In the Shadow of the Galilean*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1987.

Gonzalez, Justo L. *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

Schedule:

Backgrounds, Foregrounds, and the Text of the New Testament

Sept 5 Introduction

Required: Malina, pp. 1-26

Recommended: Johnson, pp. 1-19

Sept 7 The Context of Empires — From the OT to the NT

Required: Malina, pp. 27-116

Recommended: Johnson, pp. 23-41

Sept 12 Life in Judea through the lens of Cultural Anthropology

Required: Malina 117-185

Group Project 1: Malina Worksheet

Sept 14 The Jewish Context

Required: Begin reading Green

Recommended: Johnson, pp. 43-91

Sept 19 Issues of Interpretation: Reading the Text

Required: Continue reading Green

Sept 21 Issues of Interpretation: Reading the Text

Required: Continue reading Green

Group Project 2: Hermeneutics 101

Sept 26 Issues of Interpretation: Reading the Text

Required: Finish reading Green

Group Project 3: Hermeneutics 102

Due: Book Review 1

The Gospels and Acts

- Sept 28 Jesus and the Gospels
Required: Mark; Johnson, ch. 7
- Oct 3 Mark's Gospel
Interpretive Assignment 1: Mark 1:1-15
- Oct 5 Matthew's Gospel
Required: Matthew; Johnson, ch. 8
- Oct 10 Luke-Acts: The story in two volumes
Required: Luke-Acts; Johnson, ch. 9
- Oct 12 Jesus through Luke's Gospel
Group Project 4: Luke 7:1-8:1
- Oct 17 Jesus through John's Gospel
Required: John; Johnson, ch. 24
- Oct 19 Jesus through John's Gospel
Interpretive Assignment 2: John 9:1-41

The Growth of the Church

- Oct 24 The Ministry of Paul
Required: 1-2 Thessalonians, Romans, Johnson, chs. 10-11, 14
Due: Book Review 2
- Oct 26 The Ministry of Paul
Required: Philemon; Johnson, ch. 16; Jeffers, ch. 13
Interpretive Assignment 3: Philemon
- Oct 31 The Ministry of Paul
Required: Galatians; Johnson, ch. 14
- Nov 2 Paul and the Church at Corinth
Required: 1-2 Corinthians; Johnson, ch. 12; Jeffers, ch. 5
Group Project 5: 1 Cor. 8
- Nov 7 The Corinthian Correspondence
Required: Jeffers, chs. 11-12
Interpretive Assignment 4: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34
- Nov 9 Prison Epistles
Required: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians; Johnson, chs. 15, 17-18
- Nov 14 The Pastoral Epistles
Required: 1-2 Timothy, Titus; Johnson, ch. 19
Interpretive Assignment 5: 1 Timothy 2:8-15
- Nov 16 Faith in Practice
Required: Hebrews, James; Johnson, chs. 20, 23
Group Project 6: Hebrews 9

Nov 20-24 — Reading Week—No Class

Nov 28 General Epistles

Required: 1-2 Peter, Jude, 1-3 John; Johnson, chs. 21-22, 25

Nov 30 John's Apocalypse

Required: Revelation; Johnson, ch. 26

Dec 5 Revelation

Interpretive Assignment 6: Revelation 13

Dec 7 New Testament Narratives and their Implications

Final — **Due:** Exegetical Paper/Final Project must be in my office by Thursday Dec 14th at 11 am.